

Wanderers should think it out again

Wycombe Wanderers 0, Leytonstone 0

IF NOTHING ELSE, what was supposed to be one of Saturday's Isthmian League matches of the day underlined one thing . . . it's time for a re-think at Wycombe.

No goals from their last three games tells its own sorry tale; and not even 25 belated minutes of ferocious raiding could rewrite it.

As it was, a goalless draw just about did justice all round.

But had it not been for the cool brilliance of Wanderers' skipper, John Delaney, as general of the defence, or the impressive positioning and handling of Leytonstone's deputy keeper, Bob Ede, then matters might have taken on an entirely different complexion, either way.

In left-winger Brian Harvey, and inside-right Ken Gray, the Stones had the weapons to have tipped the balance. Indeed, after the combination of Worley and Anthony had failed narrowly twice, Harvey seemed to be heading for the first goal after 22 minutes.

He caught the Wycombe defence, Delaney and all, flat-footed as he raced through, before a colleague wandered offside well away from the scene, and referee Mr. Coghlan (Slade Green) "blew up".

Eight minutes later, Delaney got his own back by clearing the line after Harvey had taken the ball from Maskell's grasp.

Another eight minutes and the Wycombe crowd were justifiably screaming for a penalty when Vic Faulkner, trying hard if not always successfully, was "downed" while going through for a shot. Mr. Coghlan waved play on.

Ken Ward hit contact lens trouble again soon after the interval, but, unlike the Wealdstone game, no goals came while he was off the field.

Indeed, after a sluggish first 45 minutes, it was Wycombe who took the initiative in speeding play along, and although the Stones kept pace with them at first, by the fourth quarter of the match Wanderers were leaving them behind with some long overdue high football.

The transformation began when Delaney took the ball from Gray's feet as he zoned in close to goal in the 63rd minute. Three minutes later Faulkner cut into the Stones' defence, crossed inside seemingly to no one, but Worley sped in to have Hames block the chance of a shot. An almighty mix-up began, very nearly ending in "names" going into Mr. Coghlan's book as Ian Rundle and Mick Emerson tangled for a minor bout of fistcuffs.

The very fact that Emerson, the visitors' centre-forward, was that far back, and that Rundle, Wanderers' number two, was that far forward, gives some indication of the state of Leytonstone's dilemma.

By

Mike Whitesman



Len Worley (Wycombe) tries to round a Leytonstone defender.

With 11 minutes to play, Gray set Andrews up with another chance that Maskell dealt with, but Wanderers pushed back for a series of three corners, each of which gave the visitors a breathless moment.

What then to do about the lack of goal power in Wycombe's front line? Faulkner has partially taken the burden from Horseman since his introduction at centre-forward. But, without the necessary support, one man, even an unburdened Horseman, cannot harass strong defences sufficiently.

While Welsh "wizard" Geoff Anthony shows speed and penetrative ability on the left wing, much of his work is still wasted and will be until a way is found to unite the various prongs of Wycombe's attack.

That way . . . possibly to tighten up mid-field, and cut down on the criminal breakdown of the build-up through careless thinking and distribution?

Wycombe: J. Maskell; I. Rundle, C. Gale, J. Bailey, D. Delaney, A. Ward, L. Worley, B. Baker, V. Faulkner, A. Horseman, G. Anthony. Sub.: K. Samuels (not used).
Leytonstone: R. Ede, L. Tolley, R. Hammett, A. Andrews, M. Thomas, J. Charles, J. Albon, K. Gray, M. Emerson, B. Adams, B. Harvey. Sub.: A. Kimble (not used).